

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9471
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USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 066

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, SW
SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL MEDIA REACTION TO NEAR COLLISION OF US AND
SOVIET AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 04139 (DTG 072329Z) NOTAL

1. INDEPENDNT DAGENS NYHETER ON JANUARY 8 PUBLISHED TWO ADDITIONAL
ARTICLES ON THE REPORTED NEAR-TRAGEDY ON JANUARY 5 IN WHICH A
SOVIET AEROFLOT AIRCRAFT ON A MOSCOW-COPENHAGEN FLIGHT ALMOST
COLLIDED WITH A USAF SURVEILLANCE PLANE OVER THE BALTIC. TRANS-
LATIONS OF BOTH ARTICLES FOLLOW:

2. BEGIN TEXT OF FIRST ARTICLE ENTITLED, "RADAR-FILMED TRAFFIC
DISCLOSES RISKS."

QUOTE NEXT WEEK THE DEFENSE STAFF WILL EVALUATE THE FILMS MADE
DURING RADAR SCANNING LAST WEDNESDAY, WHEN A US RECONNAISSANCE
AIRCRAFT CAME CLOSE TO COLLIDING (WITH ANOTHER MACHINE) OVER THE
BALTIC. THE AMERICAN EMBASSY STATES THAT THE LETTER RECEIVED THERE
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION (DCA) HAS BEEN FORWARDED TO
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THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IN WASHINGTON. THE SWEDISH FOREIGN
DEPARTMENT IS NOT INVOLVED IN THIS MATTER. THE AIR ATTACHE AT THE
US EMBASSY SAYS THAT AS SOON AS THEY HAVE RECEIVED THE DCA'S
REPORT ON WEDNESDAY'S INCIDENT THEY WILL TAKE MEASURES.
ATTACHE' HENRY WEST: "WE ARE, OF COURSE, JUST AS ANXIOUS AS
EVERYONE ELSE TO UPHOLD AIR SAFETY.'
THE US RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT, WHICH PRESUMABLY CAME FROM WEST

GERMANY, PASSED ONLY 100 METERS IN FRONT OF THE SOVIET PASSENGER AIRCRAFT. THE INCIDENT OCCURRED IN A CIVIL AIR CORRIDOR AND THE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT HAD GIVEN NO NOTICE OF ITS INTENDED PRESENCE THERE.

LIEUT. COL. ELOF VON CELSING AT THE AIR STAFF: 'WHEN WE GET THE RADAR FILMS WE SHALL BE ABLE TO DETERMINE JUST HOW CLOSE TO COLLISION THE AIRCRAFT WERE. IF THE FILMS ARE VERY GOOD WE SHALL BE ABLE TO SAY TO THE METER HOW CLOSE THE AIRCRAFT WERE TO EACH OTHER. RADAR FILMS CAN SHOW DISTANCES OF 10-20 METERS. IT IS DIFFICULT, OF COURSE, TO PRODUCE ANY EXACT INFORMATION, BUT WE CAN MAKE A FAIRLY PRECISE APPRAISAL OF THE DANGER INVOLVED.'

SIGNALS RECONNAISSANCE - VON CELSING CONTINUES: 'PATROL FLIGHTS OF THIS TYPE TAKE PLACE EVERY DAY, BOTH FROM EAST AND WEST. IF THEY TAKE OFF FROM WEST GERMANY, FOR EXAMPLE, THEY FLY NORTHWARD UP ACROSS THE ALAND SEA WHERE THEY TURN ROUND AND THEN MAKE SEVERAL FLIGHTS BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS. THEY ARE ALWAYS AT A VERY HIGH ALTITUDE. THE PURPOSE OF THESE FLIGHTS, WHICH SWEDEN ALSO UNDERTAKES, IS SIGNALS RECONNAISSANCE; I.E., MONITORING THE RADIO TRAFFIC OF OTHER COUNTRIES. THERE IS ALSO A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OPTICAL RECONNAISSANCE. THERE IS NOTHING SECRET ABOUT THESE FLIGHTS; THEY OCCUR SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK AND ARE WATCHED CONSTANTLY IN SWEDEN BY RADAR. IF SWEDISH AIRSPACE IS VIOLATED THEN WE IMMEDIATELY SEND UP FIGHTERS TO EXPEL THE INTRUDER. SWEDISH AIRCRAFT ARE AT THE READY ALL ROUND THE CLOCK TO TAKE OFF AND EXPEL SUCH INTRUDERS, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHAT NATIONALITY THEY MIGHT BE. THERE ARE NO REGULATIONS OR RULES FOR FLYING OVER INTERNATIONAL WATER, BUT THE AMOUNT A PLANE IS TO CROSS AN AIR CORRIDOR, IT MUST REPORT THIS TO THE RELEVANT TRAFFIC CONTROL AUTHORITY. IT SOMETIMES HAPPENDS THAT AN AIR OPERATION IS REPORTED IN ADVANCE TO SWEDEN

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BEFORE THE PLANE(S) SET OUT ON PATROL. IN ONE OF THE CASES IN QUESTION, SO I'VE HEARD, (ADVANCE) NOTICE WAS APPARENTLY GIVEN TO STURUP. IT IS THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION THAT HAS NOW WRITTEN A LETTER TO THE US EMBASSY.

LARS RONART: "AS YET WE HAVE DONE NOTHING FROM THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS. AFTER ALL, IT'S UP TO THE DCA TO ACT AS THE "POLICE AUTHORITY IN AIRSPACE OVER THE WESTERN BALTIC.' AND IT IS IN THIS CAPACITY THAT THE DCA HAS WRITTEN TO THE US EMBASSY. THIS LETTER IS TO BE FORWARDED TO WASHINGTON. HENRY WEST AT THE EMBASSY IS NOT PREPARED TO COMMENT ON WHAT HAS HAPPENED UNTIL HE HAS RECEIVED A PROPER REPORT FROM THE DCA AND THE DEFENSE STAFF." UNQUOTE

3. BEGIN TEXT OF SECOND ARTICLE ENTITLED, "SPY PLANE ENQUIRY."
QUOTE: THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED YESTERDAY TO APPOINT A SPECIAL ACCIDENT COMMISSION TO EXAMINE WEDNESDAY'S NEAR COLLISION INCIDENT BETWEEN A USSR PASSENGER AIRCRAFT AND A SUSPECTED-US RECONNAISSANCE MACHINE, JUST SOUTH OF GOTLAND. THIS MEASURE CONFIRMS THAT SWEDEN, AT HIGH LEVEL, REGARDS THE MATTER AS VERY SERIOUS AND SEEKS TO HAVE IT CLARIFIED. COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE GORAN STEEN

HAS BEEN APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION. STEEN HAS EXTENSIVE AND LONG EXPERIENCE IN ENQUIRIES INTO CIVIL AND MILITARY (AIR) CRASHES AND INCIDENTS OF THIS NATURE IN SWEDEN. THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION WILL BE APPOINTED ON MONDAY BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL AVIATION (DCA).

STEEN: 'I MAY POSSIBLY ASK TO HAVE EXPERTS FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND THE DEFENSE STAFF INCLUDED IN THE GROUP OUR JOB IS TO INVESTIGATE THE INCIDENT THAT OCCURRED ON WEDNESDAY. BUT THIS DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT WE SHALL ALSO LOOK INTO THE TWO PREVIOUS INCIDENTS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN MID-SEPTEMBER WHERE IT WAS LIKEWISE REPORTED THAT AN AMERICAN RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT WAS INVOLVED.' IT IS APPARENT THAT LAST WEDNESDAY'S INCIDENT OCCURRED IN AN AREA, AIR CORRIDOR GREEN 24, WHICH IS PART OF THE SWEDISH SPHERE OF RESPONSIBILITY, EVEN THOUGH THIS IS NOT ACTUALLY SWEDISH TERRITORY OR AIRSPACE.

DETECTIVE WORK. 'WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO GET INTO CONTACT WITH THE CREW OF THE SOVIET PASSENGER AIRCRAFT AND THE MILITARY MACHINE, UNCLASSIFIED

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AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WE ARE PREPARED TO GO TO THEIR BASES TO INTERVIEW THEM.' IN TERMS OF CIVIL AIR SAFETY, OUR COOPERATION HAS BEEN VERY GOOD AND FRANK WITH THE USSR AND THE USA. BUT IN THIS INSTANCE THERE IS A MILITARY ASPECT IN THE PICTURE WHICH WILL MAKE THE FRANKNESS FACTOR QUESTIONABLE. 'WE ANTICIPATE, HOWEVER, THAT THE AIR SAFETY ASPECT WILL TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER MILITARY SECRECY. THIS IS A MATTER OF A FIELD WHERE EVERYONE SHOULD COLLABORATE WITH THE AIM OF ELIMINATING THE RISK OF NEW INCIDENTS OF THIS NATURE. REGARDING WEDNESDAY'S INCIDENT, AT PRESENT WE HAVE ONLY LIMITED INFORMATION. THE DCA, FOR INSTANCE, HAS NOT YET RECEIVED A FULL REPORT FROM THE CREW OF THE SOVIET PASSENGER PLANE.' 'INFORMATION HITHERTO FROM THE SOVIET PILOTS HAS NOT DETERMINED THE NATIONALITY OF THE MILITARY AIRCRAFT IN QUESTION. THEY TALK OF A FOUR-ENGINE JET AND PROBABLY THIS WAS WHAT IS KNOWN AS A STREETCAR; I.E., A US RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT PATROLLING THE BALTIC. 'WE MAY HAVE TO RESORT TO A LITTLE DETECTIVE WORK TO TRACK THIS DOWN.' UNQUOTE.
SMITH

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Message Attributes

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